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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OTRA](#) [OVIP](#) [KESP](#) [UNGA](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: EVO'S UNGA DELEGATION DESPERATELY SEEKING OBAMA

REF: A. LA PAZ 1824
[1](#)B. LA PAZ 1655
[1](#)C. STATE 72078

Classified By: EcoPol Chief Mike Hammer for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) An MFA insider and senior staffer of the Bolivian MFA's Policy Planning Section provided PolOff with information about the Bolivia's UNGA delegation August 29 that contradicts some publicly released information and discounts the possibility of a substantive bilateral meeting on the margins. Our contact will be flying to New York September 1 as advance party for UNGA delegation, particularly to help hone and fact-check President Morales' UNGA speech. He said, as in prior years, the speech would be drafted by the staff of Presidency Minister Juan Ramon Quintana, a strong critic of the United States, and senior palace advisors, such as Pablo Salon. Although the content will assuredly be anti-U.S., it will be narrowly focused at criticism of the current administration in order to "make sure President Obama is not offended."

Evo Wants to meet "President Obama," not us

[1](#)2. (C) Our contact claimed he had not heard of "any interest" on the part of the Bolivian delegation to meet on the margins with State Department officials. Although he claimed the GOB has a favorable opinion of A/S Thomas Shannon, and a meeting might be possible, he said the Bolivian delegation did not think such a meeting would be productive. The delegation was, rather, pinning their hopes on a meeting with Democratic Presidential Nominee Barack Obama, or, barring that with Vice Presidential Nominee Joseph Biden. Our contact asserted the Bolivian delegation has had "no luck" in this endeavor and that "Obama's people do not seem very enthusiastic about a meeting." Instead of trying to make progress with the current administration, the MFA officer said "they are waiting for Obama to take over, when they think everything will change." He said the MFA is taking a similar "freeze" stance generally, waiting to press their agenda and engage with the USG until after a change in administrations.

Morales' Proposed U.S. Meetings

¶3. (C) Morales is scheduled to meet with "all east coast" union leaders in a major meeting organized by United Healthcare Worker East (1911 SEUI) leader Dennis Rivera. He will also have meetings with many of the same political leaders (including members of the New York City Council) as he has in past UNGAs. Our contact suggested we make the point that the Bolivian government protests when our Ambassador meets with opposition leaders, while President Morales is allowed "the freedom to talk to everyone and go anywhere in the United States." He added that we should point out that the United States allows the Bolivian Ambassador in Washington the freedom to visit whomever he wants, including leaders opposed to the current administration, a right "anyone should have in a free country." (Note: The Ambassador made exactly these points in the a meeting with Foreign Minister Choquehuanca on August ¶26. End Note.)

North to Alaska Sept. 19; UNGA Sept. 21-23

¶4. (C) The MFA insider said Morales' party would travel to Alaska September 19 and 20 to meet with more than 30 indigenous chiefs, some from Canada. The meeting would be used as a publicity event to convey Morales' credibility as the "spokesman" for all indigenous and a springboard for his elements of his UNGA speech dealing with environmental and sovereignty issues. Morales would stay in New York September 21-23, according to our contact. This contradicts dates announced by Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca (reftel a).

Evo's Dream Team

¶5. (C) The delegation would consist principally of Morales, Minister of the Presidency Quintana, Foreign Minister Choquehuanca, Special Advisor Salon, and Director of Bilateral Affairs Jean Paul Guevara. Although there is a legal requirement that both the Foreign Minister and Minister of the Presidency cannot be away from the country at the same time, our contact said the Morales Administration "does not care about such things."
GOLDBERG